

Abstract

Despite considerable gains in health status since it gained independence, India remains plagued by many of the same conditions that have afflicted its population since long before 1947. Throughout the country malnutrition remains a major health threat, especially to child survival. In an attempt to improve the health status of children and their mothers, the Indian government instituted the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), currently being implemented in all Indian states. I conducted a research study around the nutritional component of the ICDS scheme. I aimed to investigate issues surrounding the use of government malnutrition treatment and prevention services by rural tribal women. I studied women's knowledge of causes, effects, treatment and prevention of malnutrition, and observed their views of available government services. I found that their beliefs and actions concerning malnutrition were governed primarily by two phenomena: a) community awareness of the disease and b) barriers to preventive practices. This report endeavors to explain these matters in greater detail.